# Dietary Supplements for House Cats

## Benefits, Risks, Recommendations

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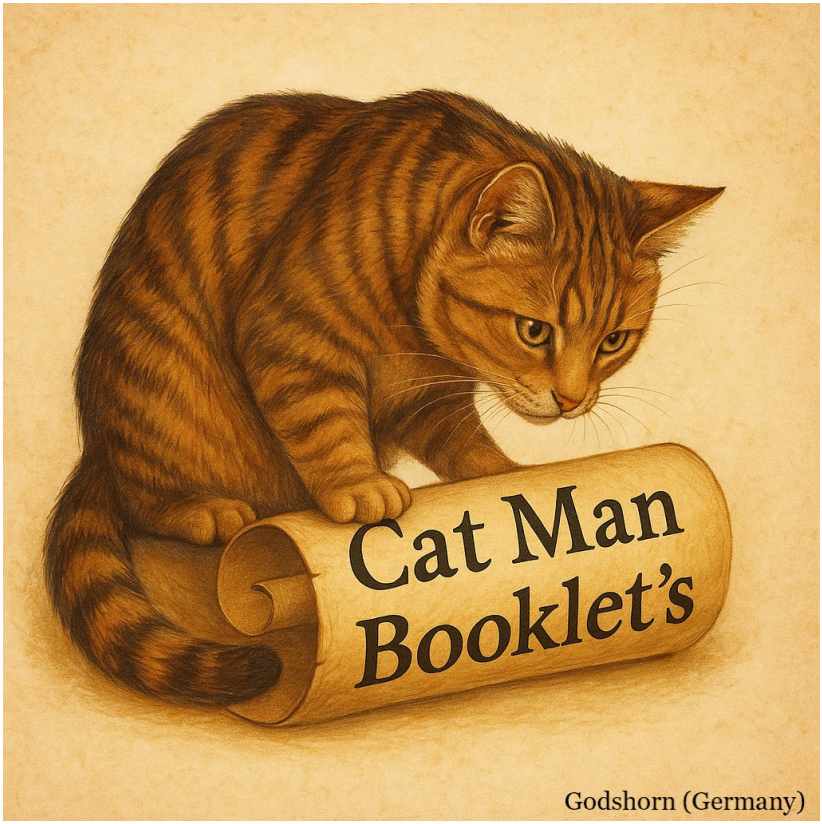

VITAMIN B
PROBIOTIKA
MINERALSTAFF
OFFMIX
LACHSÖL

## Introduction

Dietary supplements play an important role in the daily lives of many cat owners. They can help close specific nutrient gaps, support digestion, or address a cat's individual needs. At the same time, there is a risk that supplements may be used without proper consideration, potentially causing more harm than good. Responsible use therefore requires a solid understanding of the different types of products available and their effects.
The market offers a wide variety of supplements—ranging from vitamins and minerals to oils, probiotics, herbs, and combination products. Each of these serves a particular purpose. Some may be beneficial in situations involving health conditions, aging processes, or specialized diets. Others provide no real advantage or may even become harmful if dosed incorrectly.
Supplements do not replace a balanced diet. High-quality complete cat foods generally provide all essential nutrients a healthy cat needs. Therefore, additional supplements should only be used when they are demonstrably beneficial or when a specific situation justifies their use.
When health concerns arise or uncertainty exists regarding the proper dosage, decisions should always be made in consultation with a veterinarian.
This overview is designed to help classify different supplements, understand their benefits, and identify potential risks.

Vitamin C
Vitamin B
Vitaminkombi

## Vitamins

Vitamins are indispensable for many of a cat's bodily functions. They support metabolism, the immune system, cellular functions, and numerous enzymatic processes. High-quality complete cat foods generally contain sufficient amounts of all essential vitamins. As a result, additional vitamin supplementation is rarely necessary. Some cat owners introduce vitamin supplements out of concern for potential deficiencies. However, unjustified supplementation may cause more harm than good. Fat-soluble vitamins such as A, D, E, and K can accumulate in the body when given in excessive amounts, potentially leading to serious long-term health issues. Water-soluble vitamins, including the B-complex, are not stored in the body, but even then, excessive intake may place unnecessary strain on the organism.

Targeted supplementation may be beneficial under certain circumstances, such as chronic health conditions, age-related nutritional demands, or a diagnosed deficiency. In these cases, supplementation should always be carried out in consultation with a veterinarian.

Under normal conditions, a healthy cat receives all necessary vitamins from a balanced diet. Additional supplementation is appropriate only when a clear, documented need has been established.

Eierschalen-
pulver
Spurenelemente

## Minerals and Trace Elements

Minerals and trace elements perform numerous essential functions in a cat's body. They are important for bone structure, nerve signaling, enzyme activity, immune function, and metabolism. They include, among others, calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, potassium, zinc, copper, iron, iodine, and selenium. A deficiency can lead to health problems, but excessive intake also carries risks.
High-quality complete cat foods contain minerals in precisely balanced amounts. Most healthy cats therefore receive everything they need. For this reason, additional mineral supplements are generally unnecessary.
Uncontrolled supplementation can disrupt the delicate balance of nutrients. The ratio of calcium to phosphorus is particularly important for bone health. Incorrect amounts can strain or even damage the skeletal system over time.
Trace elements also should not be supplemented without a clear reason. Too much iodine can impair thyroid function, excess iron can burden the body, and overly high zinc levels may lead to copper deficiency. Many of these substances have very narrow tolerance ranges in the body. Both under- and oversupply can cause health problems.
Supplementation may be useful under certain conditions —such as specific illnesses, periods of recovery, or when a deficiency has been medically diagnosed. In such cases, the choice of product and the correct dosage should always be determined by a veterinarian.

For healthy cats, a balanced diet reliably meets their needs. Additional minerals or trace elements should only be used when there is a clear medical justification.

Lachsöl

## Omega-3 and Omega-6 Fatty Acids

Omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids are essential fats that a cat's body cannot produce on its own. They are important for skin and coat health, the immune system, and certain anti-inflammatory processes. High-quality cat foods already contain these fatty acids in well-balanced amounts, so additional supplementation should be considered carefully.

Omega-3 fatty acids—particularly EPA and DHA from marine sources—can be helpful in certain medical situations. These include inflammatory conditions, skin problems, or age-related health issues. Supplementation can be beneficial in such cases, but the correct dosage is crucial and should always be discussed with a veterinarian.

Omega-6 fatty acids are found in many plant-based oils. They support the skin's protective barrier and contribute to coat health. However, most cat foods already contain sufficient amounts. Excessive supplementation can disrupt the balance between omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids and may promote inflammatory processes. For this reason, the use of such oils should be considered very carefully.

Many commercial products combine different fatty acids, but not all are formulated in meaningful proportions. A thorough review of the ingredient list is important, especially if the cat is already eating a high-quality diet. Without a medical indication, additional fatty acids usually provide no real benefit.

Supplementation with omega-3 or omega-6 fatty acids should always be targeted and ideally guided by a veterinarian, particularly when underlying health problems exist or when a cat has special dietary requirements.

Bifidobakterien
Enterokokken

## Probiotics and Prebiotics

Probiotics and prebiotics support digestion and can help stabilize the balance of the intestinal flora. The gut microbiome plays an important role in a cat's immune system and overall health. Disturbances can occur due to illness, dietary changes, or medications, and may manifest as digestive issues.

Probiotics contain live microorganisms intended to populate the intestines and promote the growth of beneficial bacteria. These supplements vary greatly in composition and quality. Not all products contain stable bacterial strains in sufficient quantities. Careful selection is therefore important, especially for sensitive cats or after digestive disturbances.

Prebiotics work differently: they provide nutrients that support the growth of beneficial gut bacteria. This group includes substances such as inulin or certain dietary fibers. Prebiotics can stimulate digestion, but they should be used cautiously, as large amounts may stress the digestive tract.

A combination of probiotics and prebiotics is commonly used, particularly to support recovery after diarrhea, vomiting, or antibiotic treatment. They may also be helpful during periods of stress or dietary transitions. However, their use should always be targeted. If digestive problems persist or symptoms are severe, a veterinarian should be consulted to rule out underlying medical conditions.

## Herbs and Plant-Based Supplements

Herbs and plant-based supplements are widely promoted by many manufacturers and are said to support various functions—ranging from digestion and appetite to calming effects and urinary tract health. Despite this wide range of products, caution is essential. Not every herbal remedy is suitable for cats, and some plants can even be toxic.

Certain herbs may be helpful in specific situations, such as supporting digestion or promoting general well-being. Examples include fennel or chamomile, which have been used traditionally. However, the effectiveness of many such supplements is not always scientifically proven.

Dosage plays a particularly important role. Cats are highly sensitive to many plant compounds, so the use of any herbal product should be carefully considered.

Essential oils are especially problematic for cats. Many of them can be toxic even in small amounts because cats are unable to adequately metabolize certain substances. Products containing tea tree oil, eucalyptus, mint, or other strongly aromatic oils should therefore be strictly avoided.

Plant-based supplements marketed for cats vary greatly in quality and formulation. Some products combine several herbs, but these mixtures are not always meaningful or appropriate. If plant-based supplements are to be used, they should only be given in consultation with a veterinarian, especially in the case of existing medical conditions or sensitive cats.

Herbs and plant-based products may provide supportive benefits, but they are not a substitute for medical treatment and should not be used without a valid reason.

Flohsamenschalen
kokosflocken

## Conclusion

Dietary supplements can be useful in certain situations, but they are not a substitute for a balanced diet. High-quality complete cat foods generally provide all essential nutrients needed by healthy cats. Therefore, supplements should only be used when a specific need exists or when particular health requirements justify their use.
Unconsidered or excessive supplementation may place unnecessary strain on the organism, especially in the case of fat-soluble vitamins, minerals, or plant-based products. Natural substances are not automatically harmless. Proper selection and correct dosage are crucial to avoid negatively affecting the cat's health.
Omega fatty acids, probiotics, prebiotics, or certain herbs may offer targeted support, but only when there is a clear benefit and ideally under veterinary guidance. For persistent symptoms, digestive issues, or uncertainty regarding the appropriate supplement, consulting a veterinarian is important.
Dietary supplements can enrich a cat's daily life or provide support in specific situations. However, their use must always be responsible—based on actual needs rather than general recommendations.

Teebaumöl
Eukalyptusöl

For your notes

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